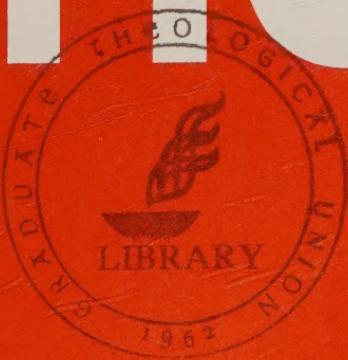


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....ON A NEW WORLD



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# Editorial

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NO DOUBT MANY of our readers are aware of the fact that the New Testament scriptures consist largely of what are called THE EPISTLES. Apart from the Gospel records and the book of the Acts of the Apostles, the New Testament is mostly a series of letters, written by the Apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul wrote to the servants of Christ who met at Rome and in Corinth, besides the more personal epistles or letters which he wrote to men like Timothy and Philemon. The New Testament ends with the book of Revelation, which begins with letters from Jesus himself to seven churches or ecclesiastical bodies situated in Asia Minor during the 1st Century A.D.

These letters, forming part of the Canon of Scripture, are a vital part of the inspired Word of God; and they provide the essential link between the events of the Old Testament and the gospel message which has gone out to all nations. The letters of the Apostle Paul are a superb commentary upon the promises of God, and without them the message of the Bible would be incomplete. The letters written in the 1st Century were intended to guide and instruct, and to exhort and admonish where necessary; and they afford Bible students today with a lifetime of study and spiritual strength.

Since its inception, LIGHT has humbly sought to continue the work of spreading abroad to all the countries of the world the gospel message taught by Christ and the Apostles. Unlike their words and epistles, which were inspired—God breathed—our articles are but an honest and prayerful study of the Word of God, in which we invite you to share. In this issue we take the opportunity to give some detailed information about the Correspondence Courses which are available to students of the Word.

The courses come in two parts. For those whose knowledge of the Bible is limited, Part I develops a growing interest in the Bible as the Word of God, and considers the message of salvation in a series of 12 simple lessons. Part II builds upon this foundation and provides the mature student with an in-depth study of the Bible, and its message for today. We now have many students throughout the world who are continuing their study of God's Word with the help of the Correspondence Courses, and if YOU would like to know more about them, write to the Editor.

Above all things, of course, it is God who will bless our study of His Word. As the Psalmist said, (Psalm 119. 97, 98, 104, 105)

'O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day. Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me . . . Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way. Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.'

# Why read the Bible?

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THE SIMPLE ANSWER to this question is that the Bible is the priceless gift of God man. It is unique among books. Its author is the great Eternal Creator; its contents reveal and explain the purpose of God in the creation of the earth and of mankind; and its power is to tell those who read it how to gain everlasting life. There is nothing in the world to compare with the Bible. The vital question is, 'Can we trust it?'

## REASONS FOR CONFIDENCE

God has given abundant reasons for absolute confidence in His word. He invites us to consider the evidence of prophecy. '*Ask me of things to come.*'<sup>1</sup> His power to foretell the future is the evidence for His existence and His Divine superintendence of world affairs. '*I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsels shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.*'<sup>2</sup>

The Bible is a book of prophecy, from Genesis to Revelation. It describes in advance the rise and fall of nations; it speaks of some events that should come to pass and of some that should never happen. Sometimes its prophecies concern the immediate future, sometimes a remote future of thousands of years. In so far as these prophecies relate to the time from their utterance to today, they have been fulfilled to the very letter. This fact inspires confidence in the fulfilment of prophecies which concern events still future, notably the second coming of Christ to the earth.

The prophecies which concern the nation of Israel are a powerful evidence for the trustworthiness of the Bible. Of that nation, God declared, '*Ye are my witnesses.*' Nearly three thousand five hundred years ago, God, through Moses, foretold the persecution and scattering of the nation of Israel and the desolation of their homeland.

<sup>1</sup>*Isaiah 45. 11*   <sup>2</sup>*Isaiah 46. 9, 10*   <sup>3</sup>*Deuteronomy 28. 15-68; Leviticus 26. 14-46*

## WHY READ THE BIBLE?

et that people would never be destroyed, nor even lose their identity. At an appointed time they would be regathered and once again become a nation in the land of their forefathers. This land would regain its fertility and become the scene of industry and prosperity.<sup>4</sup> These facts were the repeated theme of Israel's prophets. The past history and present condition of the people and land of Israel provide abundant evidence for the truth of the prophecies, and give complete assurance that the predictions concerning Israel's future glory will also become matters of fact.

### VITAL IMPORTANCE

In answering the question 'Why read the Bible?' the enlightened student can say, because it contains vital information.' The word 'vital' has the meaning of life-giving. All mankind are under the shadow of death. But the Bible contains promises about life—not just a longer life, nor just a freer life, but everlasting life<sup>5</sup> coupled with everlasting joy.<sup>6</sup> These promises are interwoven with prophecy. The same Eternal God who uttered the prophecies has graciously made the promises.

The apostle John wrote, '*This is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life.*'<sup>7</sup> The apostle Paul wrote that he lived '*In hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised before the world began.*'<sup>8</sup> The same apostle spoke of '*the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus.*' These words draw attention to another important reason why we should read the Bible.

### TRUE CHRISTIANITY

The central figure of that Holy Book is Jesus Christ. Whatever views may be held concerning him, it must be admitted that he was a historic reality. The religious movement known as Christianity is traceable back through the centuries to him. The world-wide institutions, the stupendous changes in the ways of civilisation which are attributable to Jesus Christ, altogether exclude the theory that he was a myth. The facts attested to his resurrection are equally certain as matters of history. Those facts are attested by many infallible proofs. The only reasonable explanation of the triumph of Christianity over Roman paganism, Greek philosophy, and Jewish prejudice in the first century A.D. lies in the true testimony of credible eyewitnesses concerning the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

The authentic records concerning Jesus Christ, his birth, his life, his death and his resurrection, are the writings of the New Testament. The writers of those records claimed that they were inspired by God to set down accurately the teaching of their Master. A study of their lives, characters, and experiences reveals that they were honest and genuine men. The success of their preaching against such tremendous odds is proof that their message was founded on fact.

<sup>4</sup>Jeremiah 31. 10-34   <sup>5</sup>John 3. 16   <sup>6</sup>Isaiah 35. 10   <sup>7</sup>I John 2. 25  
<sup>8</sup>Titus 1. 2;   II Timothy 1. 1

## LIGHT ON A NEW WORLD

The essence of the teaching of the apostles was that the promise of everlasting life was obtainable only through the work of Jesus Christ. The apostle John expressed the purpose of his gospel record in these terms. He said, '*these (the contents of his narrative) are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.*'<sup>9</sup> In the memorial prayer uttered by Jesus in the hearing of his disciples a few hours before his arrest at crucifixion, he said, '*This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.*'<sup>10</sup>

Every aspect of the life and mission of Christ is referred to in both the Old and New Testaments and it therefore follows that to know and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ is vitally necessary to read and understand the whole Bible. The text book of Jesus was '*Moses and all the prophets,*'<sup>11</sup> as he said to his disciples after the resurrection, '*The words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.*'<sup>12</sup>

Similarly, the apostles made many references to the Old Testament to support their arguments as they preached '*Jesus, and the resurrection.*'<sup>13</sup> Paul commended the disciple Timothy because of his love of the Holy Scriptures, which consisted at that time of the Old Testament. '*From a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.*'<sup>14</sup> No stronger reason could be advanced than this in answering the question, 'Why read the Bible?' In this same passage of Scripture, Paul sets his seal to the claim that the Old Testament is the work of Divine inspiration:

'All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.'<sup>15</sup>

### INSPIRED BY GOD

This same claim to inspiration is made by the apostles of their own teaching. Paul commended the Thessalonian believers because '*when ye received the word of God, which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.*'<sup>16</sup> The apostle John declares that the Divine message of the book of Revelation was given to him by an angel and that he '*bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ.*'

In the light of these exalted claims, it is reasonable that the Bible should be read as part of man's education; but this in itself is little compared with the spiritual blessing

<sup>9</sup>John 20. 31    <sup>10</sup>John 17. 3    <sup>11</sup>Luke 24. 27    <sup>12</sup>Luke 24. 44    <sup>13</sup>Acts 17. 18

<sup>14</sup>II Timothy 3. 15    <sup>15</sup>II Timothy 3. 16, 17    <sup>16</sup>I Thessalonians 2. 13    <sup>17</sup>Revelation 1.

## WHY READ THE BIBLE?

estows. The Bible can do more for us than anything else in the world. '*Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*'<sup>18</sup>

Faith, in the Bible, is not blind trust, but an intelligent appreciation of its contents, based on evidence. Its message is clearly super-human. Its Author has declared, '*My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.*'<sup>19</sup>

A careful reading of the Bible with an open unbiased mind will convince reflective readers of the truth of this sublime declaration. It has been well stated by one writer that the best way of attaining a thorough conviction of the authenticity and genuineness of the Scriptures and of their Divine origin is to read them constantly.'

The Bible is the revelation to man by God of the wonderful unfolding of a glorious purpose, stage by stage, in plain language, in symbol, in type, in allegory, in prose and in poetry, with the one theme running consistently throughout the entire range of its sixty-six books. This information is so compiled and written that a child can read and understand its elements, yet the oldest man living, whose whole life may have been spent in unravelling its mysteries, could not claim to have exhausted the study. The contents of the Bible can be explained only on the basis of the Apostle Peter's statement, '*The prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.*'<sup>20</sup>

### THE DIVINE THEME

The Bible contains all that it is necessary to know about God and His creative work. It describes in simple language the creation of man, the introduction into the world of sin and the consequent estrangement of man from his Maker. It explains the condition of suffering and toil, disease and death, under which the human race now groans. It unfolds the Divine plan of human redemption through Christ, by which man may be reconciled to God, and related to promises of everlasting joy, happiness and peace. It speaks of the Divinely appointed conditions upon which God will restore man to His grace and love, and of the ultimate consummation of God's purpose to abolish all evil and to fill the earth with Divine glory.

Meanwhile, the Bible gives a tranquillity of mind and gladness of heart unsurpassed by anything that this world can offer. '*Great peace have they which love my law: and nothing shall offend them.*'<sup>21</sup> Its promises are described as '*great and precious*',<sup>22</sup> and involve nothing less than participation in Divine nature.

<sup>17</sup>*Romans 10. 17*   <sup>19</sup>*Isaiah 55. 8, 9*   <sup>20</sup>*II Peter 1. 21*   <sup>21</sup>*Psalm 119. 165*   <sup>22</sup>*II Peter 1. 4*

Where else can you turn for a better message than this? Is there any satisfactory human theories and speculations? Can the poet, the orator, the scientist, philosopher, or even the Bible-rejecting theologian give you a satisfactory authoritative meaning to the fact of human existence? Is the answer to man's problem to be found in a study of nature? In a sense, nature mocks man. Mountains, seas; rivers, the planets and constellations tell him that they are as fixed as he is transient. Nature's lesson is the lesson of the autumn leaves which fall dry and withered to ground. The prophet declared,

'All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field: The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.'<sup>23</sup>

What shall be our attitude towards this Holy Book? Shall we regard it as a worthless production of a crafty and deceptive priesthood, or as the unbreakable word of the living God?

The following quotation tells us clearly why we should diligently read the Bible. This book 'reveals the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners, and the happiness of believers. Its doctrines are holy, its precepts are binding, its histories are true and its decisions are unchangeable. Read it to be wise, believe it to be saved and practise it to be holy. It contains light to direct you, food to support you, and comfort to cheer you. It is the traveller's map, the pilgrim's staff, the pilot's compass, the soldier's sword, and the Christian's charter . . . Christ is its grand subject, our own good its design and the glory of God its end. It should fill the memory, rule the heart and guide the feet. Read it slowly, frequently, and prayerfully. It is a mine of wealth, a paradise of glory and a river of pleasure . . . It involves the highest responsibility, rewards the greatest labour and condemns all who trifle with its holy contents.'

Let our assessment be that of the Psalmist, '*The righteousness of thy testimonies is everlasting: give me understanding and I shall live.*'<sup>24</sup>

H. T. Atkinson  
Banstead

<sup>23</sup>*Isaiah 40. 6-8*    <sup>24</sup>*Psalm 119. 144*

# Basic Bible teaching about God (2)

## GOD—FORETELLS THE FUTURE

God has been pleased to 'declare the end from the beginning',<sup>1</sup> in other words, to set out from the start a description of what it will be like here on the earth when His plans are complete. As part of this disclosure, God made certain promises to a man named Abraham.<sup>2</sup> These promises had to do with a particular land in which he was then living. They had to do with a very great number of Abraham's descendants, a kingdom, a king and time reference which implied the need and the capacity to live for ever. Paul helps us understand these promises. He points out that they constitute the Gospel first preached to Abraham,<sup>3</sup> and that the 'seed' spoken of in the promises specifically referred to Christ. A long stretch of time separated Abraham and the birth of Jesus, but, as the life and work of God's Son unfolded, it became evident that what had been prophesied concerning him down through the centuries was true—the 'better thing' of God's providing was centred in His dear Son.

## GOD—AS MIRRORED IN JESUS

No doubt we can learn more of what the Bible teaches about God by studying the life of Jesus than in any other way. God was his Father, so that he could truthfully say, '*I and my Father are one*'.<sup>4</sup> God not only provided him in this special way,<sup>5</sup> but also strengthened him so that, even though possessing our weak, sin-stricken nature,<sup>6</sup> he could live a sinless life.<sup>7</sup> What Jesus did and said, therefore, are exact reflections of his Father's character. To see, hear and understand Jesus was to 'know' the Father. Jesus said to Philip,

'Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?'<sup>8</sup>

In other words, if Jesus was pleased with something, God would be pleased as well; if Jesus was displeased with someone or something, then God would also be displeased.

Looking at the kind of person Jesus was through the eyes and experiences of those closest to him, we see, as in a mirror, the features of character which exist in God in the

<sup>1</sup> Isaiah 46. 9, 10    <sup>2</sup> Genesis 13. 14-17; 17. 1-8    <sup>3</sup> Galatians 3. 7, 8    <sup>4</sup> John 10. 30  
Luke 1. 26-35    <sup>5</sup> Hebrews 2. 14-16    <sup>6</sup> Hebrews 9. 14; 1 Peter 2. 21-25    <sup>7</sup> John 14. 8-10

consummate perfection. The records testify that Jesus went about doing good, healing the sick, raising the dead—works which Divinely attested to the truth of his claim to the Son of God, the Messiah promised to the nation of Israel.

Jesus insisted his words and works were from his Father, who was speaking to men through him. He said, in effect, Let me show you a better way to live. Learn of me. Learn to love as I am showing you how to love. Love God with all your heart and your neighbour as yourself,<sup>10</sup> and you will not only fulfil the requirements of the Law, but you will be able to carry life's burdens without anxiety and the disturbing intrusions of uncertainty. Trust implicitly in God. Obey His commandments as I have given them to you—there is no other way.<sup>11</sup> As you follow me, your heart will be slowly changed, you will respond to life's varying circumstances in a God-pleasing way, and you will be filled with inner peace and quiet confidence. Do not be concerned with the preservation of this life.<sup>12</sup> Guard against temporal affairs which can so easily crowd out higher spiritual considerations.<sup>13</sup> Live instead in harmony with the righteous principles of the coming kingdom, and you will be richly rewarded with the gift of eternal life.<sup>14</sup>

Jesus invited all men to come and drink of the water of life freely<sup>15</sup>—God is unwilling that any should perish.<sup>16</sup> Jesus wept that so few responded to His message.<sup>17</sup> God's voice resounded through the heavens, '*This is my beloved Son, hear ye him*'.

### GOD—A CONSUMING FIRE

Comforting as it may be to dwell upon the wonderful things the grace and love of God have made available to us, it would be negligent indeed to shy away from the blunt reality that God is also described as a 'consuming fire'.<sup>19</sup> Certainly this judicial aspect of God is before us in the Bible from beginning to end. Whole multitudes of the wicked and rebellious have perished before Him, and it would appear from the testimony that the most severe judgments are yet to come.<sup>20</sup> God has appointed a day when He will judge the world in righteousness through Jesus, whom He has appointed to function in that capacity.<sup>21</sup> There are indications that the time is not far distant when nations as well as individuals will reap what they have sown.<sup>22</sup> There will be a great sweeping away of all that offends the holiness of God. The destroyers of the earth will be destroyed,<sup>23</sup> and last the world will be rid of those who care nothing for God, and who have blatantly turned their backs upon Him.<sup>24</sup>

What are we to say to this awesome characteristic of God? Perhaps an analogy would help. Suppose we set out to build a magnificent building. The plans are perfect in every detail. The site is chosen and well prepared. All is in readiness to begin. From the very start we would be most concerned about the quality of the materials and the workmanship of those chosen to do the actual construction. We would not hesitate

<sup>8</sup>Matthew 11. 28-30   <sup>10</sup>Matthew 22. 37-40   <sup>11</sup>John 15. 14; Luke 6. 46   <sup>12</sup>Matthew 10. 37-

<sup>13</sup>Matthew 13. 20-22   <sup>14</sup>Romans 6. 23   <sup>15</sup>John 7. 37   <sup>16</sup>II Peter 3. 9   <sup>17</sup>Luke 19. 41,

<sup>18</sup>Matthew 17. 5   <sup>19</sup>Hebrews 12. 28, 29   <sup>20</sup>II Thessalonians 1. 5-10   <sup>21</sup>Acts 17. .

<sup>22</sup>II Thessalonians 2. 8-12   <sup>23</sup>Revelation 11. 16-18   <sup>24</sup>II Thessalonians 2. 10

reject a lean mixture of concrete obviously incapable of supporting the foundation. With understandable indignation, we would refuse a load of timber if it was warped and unseasoned. Every shipment would be carefully scrutinized. How unthinkable it would be to allow material to be used which did not meet the standards of quality set out in the specifications. How diligently we would observe the skills of the craftsmen. Incompetence would have no place in the enterprise. It could not be otherwise. Certainly no charge of unkindness, unreasonableness or injustice could be laid at our refusal to accept that which is not compatible with the noble edifice we are building.

### GOD—THE ARCHITECT AND BUILDER

Now consider what God is doing. He is building a house,<sup>25</sup> a spiritual temple to be exact.<sup>26</sup> Made up of men and women, who, in their exalted state,<sup>27</sup> will fill the earth with His glory. His plans were perfectly prepared in the beginning. This earth was the site selected and it was carefully prepared. He has specified in unequivocal terms the conditions under which all material will be admitted for use in the building. Love,<sup>28</sup> faith<sup>29</sup> and obedience.<sup>30</sup> These are the indispensable prerequisites of character which are required without exception.

Is there injustice with God for refusing the unloving, the faithless, the disobedient? Is there unkindness with God if He at last declares an end to His forbearance and, as He did in the days of Noah,<sup>31</sup> destroy those who have filled the earth with violence and flaunted His righteous laws with imagined impunity? God is no respecter of persons.<sup>32</sup> He does not play games. He is jealous for His Name and will not give His glory to another.<sup>33</sup> He cannot, in justice to Himself, circumvent the oblivion that justly awaits those who would have none of His ways.

### GOD'S LOVE—NOT THE TOLERATION OF EVIL

Jesus, the exact reflection of God's character, looked about him with anger upon the stony hearts so inflexible and impervious to the evidence before them.<sup>34</sup> He went through the temple overturning the tables of the money-changers who were desecrating God's sanctuary.<sup>35</sup> He levelled a stinging rebuke at Peter when the Father's will concerning him was called into question.<sup>36</sup> A description of his coming judgment seat records his displeasure at the wicked in the words, '*I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*'<sup>37</sup>

To receive Christ's displeasure would not be pleasant under any circumstances. His enemies were so uncomfortable that they sought to kill him. Peter was no doubt deeply hurt by his Master's swift and unvarnished castigation. He loved Jesus. He would even in a short time deny him and repent in bitter tears. Yet this initial, clumsy

<sup>25</sup>Hebrews 3. 1-6      <sup>26</sup>II Corinthians 6. 16      <sup>27</sup>I John 3. 1-3      <sup>28</sup>I John 4. 20, 21

<sup>29</sup>Hebrews 11. 6      <sup>30</sup>Matthew 7. 24-27      <sup>31</sup>Hebrews 11. 7      <sup>32</sup>Acts 10. 34      <sup>33</sup>Isaiah 42. 8

<sup>34</sup>Mark 3. 5      <sup>35</sup>Matthew 21. 12, 13      <sup>36</sup>Matthew 16. 23      <sup>37</sup>Matthew 7. 23; Luke 13. 27

ineptitude in spiritual things readily yielded to the benefit of lessons well learned, and he became a most willing and effective leader in those early days of Christian activity.

### GOD—PERFECTION AND HOLINESS

There is a perfection and holiness exclusive to God and to the arrangements He has established for His pleasure and our highest possible benefit. It is seen in Jesus. No misdirected human intrusion, however well intentioned, has been or ever will be permitted to defile. It may appear severe and inflexible to the limited view of untrained human perception, but wisdom perceives a pre-eminent perfection and completeness in the great work of God which has so precisely unfolded thus far and will, at last, be fulfilled in a splendour now hidden from mortal eyes.

### CONCLUSIONS

*'The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork'*<sup>38</sup>—so much so that only a fool could say in his heart, There is no God.<sup>39</sup> Because God exists, the Bible exists, and becomes the welcome source of information about Him and His purpose with the earth and mankind living thereupon. This Word of God gives an explanation of the circumstances of life which are historically evident and, in an arrangement precisely suited to our greatest need, it provides an alternative to oblivion. This alternative is not without obligations. There is need for education, discipline, and faithful perseverance—and herein lies the problem.

Where there is the need for education, it is easier not to study.

Where there is a need for discipline, rebellion is not far away.

Where there is need for faith and faithfulness, the love of many waxes cold, and turns from the transforming power of God's ways.<sup>40</sup>

The issues are clear. It is a matter of eternal death or eternal life. There is one God whose love has offered us life. There is one faith, replete with reliable supporting evidence. There is one baptism, the appointed way of union with Christ, and the thing related to heirship in his coming kingdom.<sup>41</sup>

The Bible is, in many respects, a difficult book to understand. To read where its pages may fall open can lead us into heavy going. Some chapters are full of names difficult even to pronounce. Others are filled with obscure language, and still others relate to an ancient history which may seem highly irrelevant to life as we live it today.

If, however, we are going to look seriously at basic Bible teaching about God, we do have to open it. Perhaps the references noted here will be helpful in making a start and will lead us to heed the advice of a very wise man:

'Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.' Ecclesiastes 12. 13.

<sup>38</sup>Psalm 19. 1

<sup>39</sup>Psalm 14. 1

<sup>40</sup>Romans 12. 1, 2

<sup>41</sup>Ephesians 4. 4-6

# LIGHT—BIBLE CORRESPONDENCE COURSE

As an introduction to the Bible Correspondence Course, Lesson 3 of Part II, the more advanced course, has been reproduced. It forms an article in itself, and can be read as such.

## The Creation

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GOD EXISTS AND has revealed His nature and purpose in the Bible, His Word. We have learnt this from the first two lessons. Apart from this revelation we could know very little of God and nothing of His plan: we could not know how He began to put this plan into effect nor what is the end in view. Many theories have been put forward to explain how life in its many forms began on this earth. We can ignore all such theories for God Himself has told us how everything began. The Bible opens with the words, 'In the beginning God created' and the account which follows tells us all we need to know about the origin of life.

Though it is a simple record it is not unscientific. The heaven and the earth were probably created long before life as we know it. This is allowed for in the Genesis record which tells us that when God began to create life the earth was waste and void (see Genesis 1 v 1 and 2). That was nearly 6,000 years ago. Whether there had been life on earth before we do not know. There may well have been. The Bible is not concerned with this: it reveals God's plan for this present order and is not concerned with anything other. The lesson which follows directs us to the Bible record of Creation.

### THE CREATION

In the beginning God created all things

Genesis 1. 1  
Hebrews 11. 3

The reason for creation is described in

Isaiah 45. 18  
Revelation 4. 11

The work of the Creator at the beginning was not seen by man. Genesis 1  
The Genesis record is God's revelation of how things began and Hebrews 11. 3  
how they were made.

## LIGHT ON A NEW WORLD

The doctrine that God made all things is taught in many parts of the Bible.

1. Books of Moses	Exodus 20. 11
2. The Psalms	Psalm 33. 6 Psalm 90. 2 Psalm 102. 25
3. Books of the Prophets	Isaiah 42. 5 Jeremiah 10. 12 Amos 4. 13
4. The New Testament	Acts 17. 24 Acts 14. 15 Revelation 10. 6

### THE SIX CREATION DAYS

MAKE A LIST OF THE WORK OF THE FIRST SIX Genesis 1  
DAYS AND NOTE THE ORDER OF THE  
CREATION.

*Note* That each new day begins with 'God said'. Everything Genesis 1. 3, 6, 9,  
came from God. 11, 14, 20, 24

*Note* That the 'evening and the morning were first/second/third Genesis 1. 5, 8,  
etc. day'. 13, 19, 23, 31

The Hebrew 'day' began at sunset and ended at the next sunset.  
The Hebrew day was divided into 'evening', which began at sunset and ended at sunrise, and 'morning' began at sunrise and ended at sunset.

### CREATION OF MAN

Man was formed out of the dust of the ground. Genesis 2. 7, 19

When God breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life, he Job 34. 4-15  
became a living soul or creature. Therefore, man is entirely Psalm 146. 4  
dependent upon God for his life. If God withdraws the breath or Isaiah 2. 22  
spirit of life from man he becomes a dead creature.

## BIBLE CORRESPONDENCE COURSE

THERE ARE MANY TEXTS IN THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS WHICH TEACH THIS.

The English word 'soul' is used in the Old Testament for both man and animals. Genesis 1. 20,  
24, 30.

In these verses the original Hebrew word 'nephesh' is translated by the English word 'creature'.

Sometimes the same word is translated 'soul', other times it is translated 'creature'. Genesis 2. 7  
Genesis 9. 12,  
15, 16

A creature or soul becomes alive when God breathes into it the breath of life. A creature or soul becomes lifeless when God takes away its breath. Genesis 2. 7  
Psalm 104. 29

These texts teach that the soul is not something which can exist independently from man or animal. The soul is the man, the soul is the animal, for both man and animals are living souls or living creatures.

### MAN, THE IMAGE OF GOD

Only man was made in God's image or likeness. Genesis 1. 26-28

It was man who was crowned with honour and glory above all the creation. Psalm 8. 5

### MAN'S DESTINY IN CREATION

God made man to rule over the earth and over the entire animal creation. Genesis 1. 26  
Psalm 8. 1-8

Because man was made in the image of God, he had a special responsibility to God. It was this bond between God and man which lifted man above the rest of the creation.

*Note* But man sinned (this will be dealt with in detail in the next lesson) and because of sin he became alienated from his Creator and was no longer in a position to fulfil God's purpose in His creation. Only a sinless man could do this and the writer to the Hebrews in the New Testament tells us who this is. Hebrews 2. 6-10

## *LIGHT ON A NEW WORLD*

You will also note that this is a quotation from Psalm 8—  
COMPARE THEM.

The New Testament tells us of the true image of God.

II Corinthians 4. 4  
Colossians 1. 15  
Hebrews 1. 3

OUTSIDE THIS TEACHING WE CANNOT FIND  
THE MEANING OF LIFE OR THE REASON FOR  
THE CREATION.

### **CREATION OF WOMAN**

Adam, the first man, was alone. He was superior to the animal Genesis 2. 20 creation. They were not suitable for companionship.

Eve, the first woman, was created by God out of Adam, the first Genesis 2. 21-23 man.

### **THE FIRST MARRIAGE AND ITS STATUS**

Adam became joined with Eve his wife. They became one flesh. Genesis 2. 24  
Matthew 19. 4-5  
Mark 10. 6-9

Since God created one woman for Adam as his wife, this was Matthew 19. 6 seen as the ideal for the marriage state, which should never be broken.

The ideal of one husband and one wife was taught in the New I Timothy 3. 2, 12 Testament as the Christian standard for the marriage union.

### **CONCLUSION**

#### **OUR RESPONSIBILITY**

God is not only the great Designer and Creator of the Universe: He is also the One who alone sustains and controls life on the earth. He is controlling it in such a way that His plan will be fulfilled. ‘As truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD.’ This purpose will be realised when man reflects to the full the glory of God being changed completely to His image, mentally, morally and physically.

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Meanwhile, God calls upon men and women to glorify Him by obeying His will. The apostle Paul spoke of God, the great Creator: '*God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth*'. Then he clearly states what God required of those He created:

'That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: for in him we live, and move, and have our being'.

A little later he says that God '*now commandeth all men every where to repent*'.

This is the duty of men and women, to listen to God's word, to obey His will, and to honour Him in all their ways. This is the purpose for which we were created.

### QUESTIONS TO LESSON 3

Using references where possible to support your reply, answer the following:

1. List the events of the first six days of Creation.
2. Quote FOUR references which tell of man's dependence on God.
3. Why did God create man?
4. How was Eve created?
5. The Bible commences with the words 'In the beginning God created . . .' Explain what you understand by this statement.
6. ' . . . And man became a living soul'. (Genesis 2. 7). Explain what you understand by this statement.

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# BIBLE READING TABLES

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JUNE					
1	Joshua	18	Isaiah	24	Heb. 6, 7
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